

# Parables of Jesus

*Three weeks in the stories Jesus told to show us the heart of God.*

21 days · about 10 minutes a day · for the whole family

## How to use this

Pick a time you already gather — dinner, or just before bed — and keep it there. The whole thing takes about ten minutes.

1. Read the passage together. On a busy night, just read the memory verse — that counts.
2. Read the short devotion out loud.
3. Talk through the questions. Let everyone answer in their own words; there are no wrong answers.
4. Say the memory verse together, and try to remember it tomorrow.

## DAY 1 The Sower and the Soils Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

Jesus tells about a farmer scattering seed that lands on four kinds of ground, and only the good soil grows a harvest. He explains that the seed is God's word, and the soils are different hearts that hear it. This story isn't really about plants at all; it's an invitation to ask God to make our own hearts soft and ready to receive His truth. The wonderful news is that we don't have to soften our hearts on our own, because God delights to do that work in us when we come to Him.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What are some things that can crowd out God's word in our hearts, like the weeds in the story?
2. What do you think it looks like to be 'good soil' that lets God's word grow?
3. How could our family help each other listen to God this week?

### MEMORY VERSE · MARK 4:20

*“Those which were sown on the good ground are those who hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, some thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times.”*

## DAY 2 The Wheat and the Tares Matthew 13:24-30; Matthew 13:36-43

In this story a farmer plants good wheat, but an enemy secretly sows weeds among it, and they grow up together. The servants want to pull the weeds right away, but the master says to wait until harvest so the wheat isn't harmed. Jesus is teaching us that good and evil grow side by side in this world for now, and we can trust God to sort everything out perfectly in His time. We don't have to panic when things seem mixed up, because the King who planted the good seed is patient, wise, and completely in control.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why do you think the master told the servants to wait instead of pulling the weeds right away?
2. How does it help to know that God will make everything right in the end?
3. When something feels unfair, how can we trust God to take care of it?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 13:43

*“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

## DAY 3 The Mustard Seed and Leaven Matthew 13:31-33; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-21

Jesus compares God's kingdom to a tiny mustard seed that grows into a big tree, and to a little bit of yeast that works through a whole batch of dough. Both pictures show that God can start something huge from something that looks small and unimpressive. We might feel little or wonder if our small acts of faith and love matter, but God loves to do mighty things from humble beginnings. The kingdom He is building will keep growing, and nothing can stop it.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why might Jesus choose something tiny like a seed to describe God's big kingdom?
2. What is something small we could do this week that God might use in a big way?
3. How does this story encourage you when you feel little or unnoticed?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 13:31

*“He set another parable before them, saying, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field;”*

## DAY 4 The Hidden Treasure and Pearl Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus tells about a man who finds treasure hidden in a field and a merchant who finds one priceless pearl, and both joyfully give up everything they own to have it. He is showing us that knowing God and belonging to His kingdom is worth more than anything else in the whole world. When we truly see how good God is, we don't give things up grudgingly; we give them up with joy, the way you'd happily trade pennies for a treasure chest. The best part is that God offers us this treasure by His grace, freely, in Jesus.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What did the man and the merchant feel when they found their treasure?
2. What are some things people treasure most, and how do they compare to knowing God?
3. What would it look like for our family to treasure God like that?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 13:44

*“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.”*

## DAY 5 The Dragnet Matthew 13:47-52

Jesus describes a big fishing net that catches all kinds of fish, and then the fishermen sort the good from the bad. He explains that one day God will gather everyone and lovingly bring His people home. This is a serious story, but it's also a kind warning, because Jesus tells it so that we will turn to Him while there is still time. Because Jesus came to rescue sinners by His death and resurrection, no one has to fear that final sorting who is trusting in Him.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why do you think Jesus told a story about sorting at the end?
2. How does it feel to know that God wants to gather His people safely to Himself?
3. What does it mean to trust Jesus today instead of waiting?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 13:47

*“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet, that was cast into the sea, and gathered some fish of every kind,”*

## DAY 6 The Unforgiving Servant Matthew 18:21-35

A servant who owed his king a debt he could never repay is completely forgiven, but then he refuses to forgive a fellow servant who owes him a tiny amount. Jesus is showing us that God has forgiven us an enormous debt of sin that we could never pay back ourselves. When we really understand how much we've been forgiven, it changes the way we treat others who hurt us. Forgiving isn't always easy, but we forgive because we have first been forgiven so freely by God.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why was it so wrong for the forgiven servant to refuse to forgive his friend?
2. How does remembering God's forgiveness help us forgive others?
3. Is there someone we need to forgive, and how can we ask God to help?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 18:33

*“Shouldn’t you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?”*

## DAY 7 The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37

When a man is hurt and left on the road, the religious people pass by, but a Samaritan, someone others looked down on, stops to help and cares for him at his own cost. Jesus tells this story to answer the question 'Who is my neighbor?' and shows that love means helping anyone in need. In a way, this is also a picture of Jesus, who came to rescue us when we were helpless and could not save ourselves. As we receive His mercy, we get to share that same mercy with the people God puts in our path.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why do you think the Samaritan stopped when the others walked by?
2. Who are the 'neighbors' around us that might need help?
3. What is one kind thing we could do this week for someone in need?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 10:27

*“He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.””*

## DAY 8 The Friend at Midnight Luke 11:5-13

Jesus tells about a man who knocks on his friend's door at midnight asking for bread, and keeps asking until he receives. Then Jesus reminds us that God is a good Father who loves to give good gifts to His children. This story encourages us to keep coming to God in prayer, not because He's reluctant, but because He is far kinder than any earthly friend or parent. We can talk to God about anything, anytime, knowing He hears us and cares for us deeply.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What does this story teach us about not giving up in prayer?
2. How is God even better than a good friend or a loving parent?
3. What is something our family could keep praying about together?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 11:9

*“I tell you, keep asking, and it will be given you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened to you.”*

## DAY 9 The Rich Fool Luke 12:13-21

A man in this story has such a good harvest that he builds bigger barns to store it all and plans to relax for years, but that very night his life ends. Jesus calls him a fool, not because he was rich, but because he stored up things for himself and forgot about God. It's a gentle but honest reminder that our lives are about so much more than the stuff we collect. True riches come from knowing God and being 'rich toward Him,' a treasure that lasts forever.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What had the rich man forgotten when he made all his plans?
2. What does it mean to be 'rich toward God' instead of only toward ourselves?
3. How can our family use what we have to honor God and help others?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 12:21

*“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*”

## DAY 10 The Wise and Foolish Builders Matthew 7:24-29; Luke 6:46-49

Jesus describes two builders: one builds his house on rock and stands firm in the storm, while the other builds on sand and his house falls. He explains that hearing His words and actually doing them is like building on a solid rock. Storms come to every family and every life, but the one whose foundation is Jesus and His word will not be swept away. We build wisely when we don't just admire Jesus' words, but trust Him and live by them.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What was the difference between the two builders in the story?
2. What are some ways we can build our lives on Jesus' words?
3. How does trusting Jesus help us when hard 'storms' come?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 7:24

*““Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on a rock.”*

## DAY 11 The Two Debtors Luke 7:36-50

While Jesus is eating at a Pharisee's house, a woman who had sinned much washes His feet with her tears, and Jesus tells a short story about two people who are forgiven different amounts. The one forgiven more loves more, and Jesus shows that the woman loves so deeply because she knows how much she's been forgiven. None of us is too sinful for Jesus to welcome, and none of us is so good that we don't need His forgiveness. When we grasp how much grace we've received, our hearts overflow with love for Him.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why did the woman love Jesus so much in this story?
2. How does knowing we are forgiven change the way we love God?
3. What is one way we could show our love for Jesus this week?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 7:47

*“Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”*

## DAY 12 The Barren Fig Tree Luke 13:6-9

A fig tree hasn't grown any fruit for three years, and the owner wants to cut it down, but the gardener asks for more time to dig around it and care for it. This story shows us both God's patience and His invitation to grow and change. God is wonderfully kind, giving us time and tending to us so that good fruit can grow in our lives. His patience is a gift meant to lead us closer to Him, not something to ignore.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. How does the gardener in the story show patience and care?
2. What kind of 'good fruit' do you think God wants to grow in our lives?
3. How can we thank God for being patient with us?

### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 13:8

*“He answered, ‘Lord, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it, and fertilize it.’”*

## DAY 13 The Great Banquet Luke 14:15-24; Matthew 22:1-14

A man prepares a huge feast and sends out invitations, but the first guests all make excuses, so he invites the poor and the strangers from the streets to fill his house. Jesus is telling us that God has prepared a joyful feast in His kingdom and warmly invites everyone to come. The sad part of the story is the people too busy to come, and the beautiful part is that God's invitation reaches the people no one else expected. The good news is that the door is open wide, and God says, 'Come.'

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why do you think the first guests made excuses not to come?
2. How does it feel to know that God invites everyone to His feast?
3. What might keep people too 'busy' to come to God, and how can we say yes?

### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 14:23

*““The lord said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’”*

## DAY 14 The Lost Sheep Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 18:10-14

A shepherd with a hundred sheep leaves the ninety-nine to search for the one that wandered off, and when he finds it, he joyfully carries it home. Jesus tells this to show how much God loves each person, even the one who feels lost or far away. You are never just a number to God; He knows you by name and comes looking for you. Heaven rejoices when even one lost person is found and brought safely home.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why would the shepherd go after just one lost sheep?
2. How does it feel to know God cares about each of us that much?
3. Who is someone we could pray for who feels far from God?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 15:7

*“I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.”*

## DAY 15 The Lost Coin Luke 15:8-10

A woman who loses one valuable coin lights a lamp, sweeps the whole house, and searches carefully until she finds it, then calls her friends to celebrate. Like the lost sheep, this little story shows how precious each person is to God and how much joy there is when someone is found. God doesn't shrug off the lost; He searches with care and rejoices when they come home. Every single person matters that much to the heart of God.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What did the woman do to find her lost coin?
2. Why do you think there is so much joy in heaven when one person is found?
3. How does it change us to know we are precious to God?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 15:10

*“Even so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.”*

## DAY 16 The Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-32

A son takes his share of the money, wastes it all far from home, and finally returns ashamed, only to have his father run to meet him with hugs and a celebration. This is one of the most beautiful pictures in all of the Bible of how God welcomes us back when we come to Him. We may feel like we've wandered too far or messed up too badly, but our Father is watching the road, ready to run toward us with open arms. His grace doesn't wait for us to earn our way back; it runs to meet us right where we are.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. How did the father respond when his son came home?
2. What does this story show us about how God feels when we come back to Him?
3. Why do you think the older brother struggled, and how can we celebrate God's grace?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 15:20

*“He arose, and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”*

## DAY 17 The Shrewd Manager Luke 16:1-13

Jesus tells about a manager about to lose his job who cleverly plans ahead for his future, and uses it to teach us to be wise with the things God gives us. Jesus isn't praising dishonesty; He's showing that we should use our money and resources thoughtfully for things that really last. We can't serve both God and money, so we ask God to help us hold our possessions loosely and use them for His good purposes. When God is first in our hearts, even ordinary things like money become tools to love Him and others.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What does it mean that we can't serve both God and money?
2. How can we use the things we have in wise and loving ways?
3. What is one way our family could use what we have to bless someone?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 16:13

*“No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You aren't able to serve God and Mammon.”*

## DAY 18 The Rich Man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31

Jesus tells of a rich man who ignores a poor, hungry man named Lazarus right outside his gate, and how their situations are reversed after death. It's a sobering story, but Jesus tells it tenderly to wake us up to care about the people around us and to listen to God's word now. He reminds us that real life is bigger than this one, and that what we do with God and with others truly matters. The hope woven through it is that God's word and, ultimately, Jesus risen from the dead, calls us to turn to Him today.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What did the rich man fail to notice about Lazarus at his gate?
2. How can we keep our eyes open to people who are hurting around us?
3. Why is it important to listen to what God says while we have time?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 16:31

*““He said to him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead.’””*

## DAY 19 The Persistent Widow Luke 18:1-8

A widow keeps coming to an unfair judge asking for justice until he finally helps her, and Jesus says God is far better than that judge. The lesson is that we should always pray and not give up, because our loving God truly hears His children. If a grumpy judge eventually answers, how much more will our good Father respond to those who call on Him day and night. When prayers feel slow, we can keep coming to God, trusting that He is kind, attentive, and never too busy for us.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What does the widow teach us about not giving up in prayer?
2. How is God different from the unfair judge in the story?
3. What is something we can keep praying about even when answers feel slow?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 18:1

*“He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray, and not give up,”*

## DAY 20 The Pharisee and Tax Collector Luke 18:9-14

Two men go to the temple to pray: one proudly lists all the good things he's done, while the other simply asks God for mercy on him, a sinner. Jesus says it's the humble man who goes home right with God, not the proud one. This story reminds us that we don't come to God bragging about how good we are; we come honestly, knowing we need His grace. The wonderful truth is that God is near to the humble, and He freely forgives all who simply ask Him for mercy.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. What was the difference between how the two men prayed?
2. Why do you think God welcomed the humble man's simple prayer?
3. How can we come to God honestly instead of trying to look good?

#### MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 18:14

*“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*”

## DAY 21 The Workers and The Talents Matthew 20:1-16; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27

Jesus tells of a vineyard owner who generously pays every worker the same, and of a master who entrusts his servants with money to invest while he's away. Together these stories show God's amazing grace, which gives freely and not by what we earn, and His call to faithfully use whatever He has given us. We don't serve God to earn His love; we serve out of joy because He has already been so good to us. As we finish these three weeks in the parables, may we live as people who have received God's grace and gladly use our lives for Him.

### TALK ABOUT IT

1. How was the vineyard owner surprisingly generous to all the workers?
2. What 'gifts' or abilities has God given you that you could use for Him?
3. How does God's grace make us want to serve Him with joy instead of fear?

#### MEMORY VERSE · MATTHEW 25:21

*““His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*”

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